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THE LIBRARY.

"Nihil legebat quod non excerpteret."

THE importance of the library depends very much on the size of the house and the taste or disposition of the owner, especially if he is of a literary turn of mind. Several considerations of importance should be considered when selecting the room to be devoted to the library. For instance, it is desirable that the room should be well lighted with windows facing the north, or if this cannot be obtained they should face east, thereby receiving and imparting an even steady light in the room, without the glare and heat of sunshine, which, although we cannot usually have too much sunlight to keep our dwelling-rooms healthy, is rather inconvenient when we are engaged in study, and is apt at the same time to parch and fade the colors of the bindings of the books.

The bookcases must also be, if possible, so arranged that the titles of the books when in their places, can be readily deciphered.

Due regard must be paid to the preservation of the contents of the shelves by keeping the books well dusted and the room well aired and warmed.

The amount of wall space for the cases or the fitting up of book shelves, depends, of course, very much on existing requirements, and it may also be desirable to take into account and to provide for the continual growth in the number of books, taking care to remember that "a few books well chosen are of more use than a great library."

The highest shelf in the case should not be more than five feet six inches high, which would be well within easy reach of the hand, but if

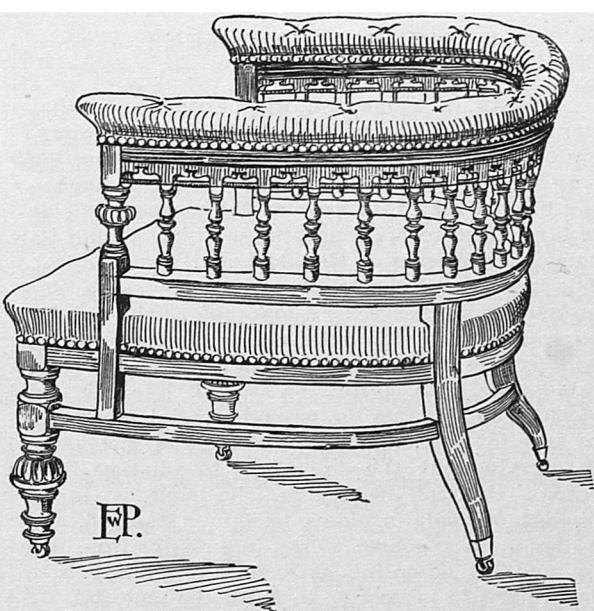
placed much higher, involves the use of a pair of steps, unnecessary trouble in reaching the books, and would very likely prevent ready access when minutes are of value to the reader.

An important reason why they should be kept low is that the hot and vitiated air in most rooms near the ceiling tends to impoverish and destroy the material of the binding to the books when placed in shelves near the ceiling.

Another great advantage in keeping the top of the bookcases at most about seven feet from the floor, is that it is much more easily reached by a servant to keep clean from the accumulation of dust and dirt, while the wall space above lends itself more readily to much better decorative effects, such as a deep frieze carried round the room, and also provides an admirable position on the top of the bookcases for the display of jars, vases, busts and other means of artistic decorative display such as I have indicated in my sketch.

The frieze beneath the cornice, which usually terminates the cases, is a very good place for carved or painted mottoes and inscriptions appropriate to the room, such, for instance, as follows:

"Books teach us to refine our pleasures when young, and to recall them with satisfaction when old."



LIBRARY CHAIR.

"He that loves reading has everything within his reach."

"Books are kind friends; we benefit by their advice, and they exact no confessions."

"So long as you are ignorant, be not ashamed to learn."

"The wise man knows he knows nothing, the fool thinks he knows all."

Such inscriptions might be decoratively painted on small tiles about three inches deep, which, if inserted under the cornice to the cases, would have a very pretty effect; similar hand-painted tiles could be used with advantage in the panels to the pilasters and lower doors.

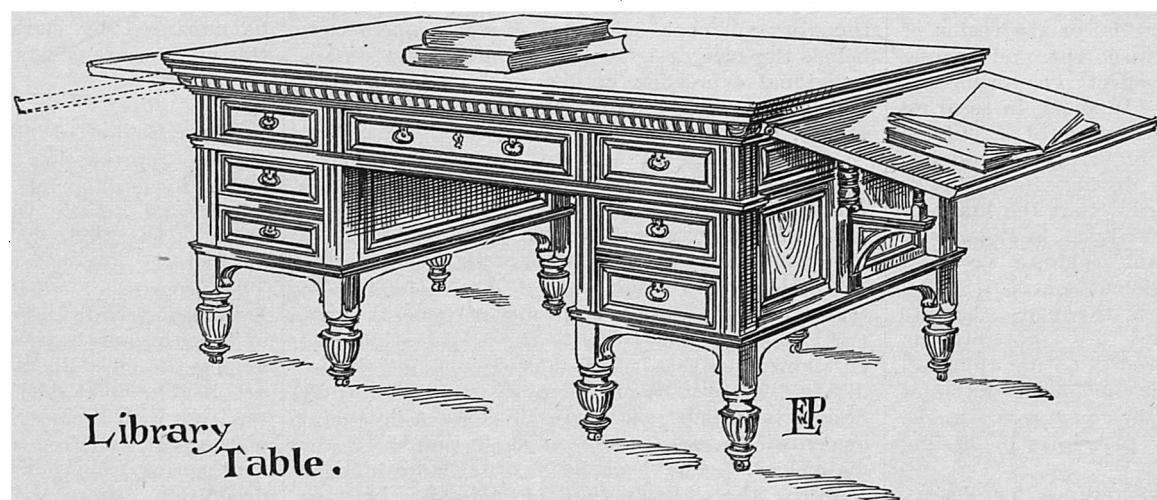
"Books are the cheapest entertainment and the most lasting pleasures."

"A wise book is a true friend, its author a public benefactor."

"Books alone can never teach the use of books."

"To read and not to understand, is to pursue and not to take."

The lower portion of the bookcases, which are usually the height of an ordinary sideboard projecting from the wall about eighteen inches are enclosed with doors which are occasionally glazed. This lower part should contain folios and other large works; some should be set apart and provided with shelves for arranging and filing periodicals and papers, others can be provided with



Library Table.



A MODERN BOOK CASE. DESIGNED BY E. W. POLEY.

drawers, to hold drawings, prints, photographs, etc., while the shelves above the sideboard may be appropriated to quarto and octavo volumes.

To protect the books from dust, a small leather valance should be fixed against the edge of the shelves which, when scolloped and stamped with a little simple gilt ornamentation, adds considerably to the decorative appearance.

Blinds made of silk or some other suitable material, hung on spring rollers, is a favorite means for covering up and protecting the books, when not in use, from dust and the chance of being bleached; glazed doors made to slide in grooves, as shown in sketch, is another means to the same end, but are by some people considered very objectionable as they very often involve great trouble in obtaining access to the books, especially if the cases are locked and the key is not immediately at hand. In my opinion they are certainly less objectionable than glass doors made to open on hinges which have an unhappy knack of getting in one's way.

Although the library is devoted to the serious work of study, it must be substantially and comfortably furnished with about half a dozen strong and easy chairs of different but serviceable shapes, the seats of which should be covered with leather or with stuffs of various rich designs and warm effect, and a few small low tables which can be easily moved to different positions in the room, according to desire, for the comfortable perusal of periodicals and papers.

A large pedestal table should occupy the centre of the room fitted up with little drawers, as in sketch, the top covered with leather fixed flush to the table within about an inch of the edge. At each end of this table a sloping desk might be so arranged as to draw from out of the thickness of the table top, resting on brackets for the more convenient reading of large and heavy volumes, these desks to be pushed back into the thickness of the top when they are not in use.

By all means make the library home-like and pleasant, too much trouble cannot be taken to make it enjoyable for work or recreation; pictures may be hung on the walls if space can be spared for them, and by no means banish from this room good specimens of art works such as plates, jars, metal work, ivories, Venetian glass, and such other similar decorative objects of art manufacture.

Art and science has no enemies but in those who are ignorant, and if we surround ourselves in our daily lives with beautiful objects, they must tend to influence the mind for good and create a love for all that is beautiful and true in form and color.

A TRULY AMERICAN PAINTER.

BY JAMES B. THOMSON.

THE artistic creed of George Inness, the most original and forceful of American painters, a representative collection of whose works has been on exhibition at the American Art galleries during the past few weeks, is best summed up in the following words used by himself in an interview not many years since: "The painter simply tries to reproduce in other minds the impression which a scene has made upon him. A work of art does not appeal to the intellect. It does not appeal to the moral sense; its aim is not to instruct, not to edify, but to awaken an emotion. This emotion may be one of love, of pity, of veneration, of hate, of pleasure, or of pain. The true beauty of the work consists in the beauty of the sentiment or emotion which it inspires. Its real greatness consists in the quality and the force of this emotion."

Having given this reason for "the faith that is in him," the student of the works of Inness may see how consistently and conscientiously he has carried it out throughout his whole artistic career. He is the truest interpreter of those emotions which the varied aspects of nature in her different moods arouse in the souls of men, that this country has as yet produced. Touched here and there by

the influences of great painters and great schools, he has yet throughout preserved his individuality. For George Inness is not the mere painter who transfers for us to canvas, topographically, the hills and vales, the rivers, mountains, fields and meadows of our land. He has done more than this. With the intensity of his poetical nature he has penetrated into Nature's secrets, has grasped her story, and has written her symphonies as no American artist has yet done.

Listen to the words which are appended to one of his strongest and most characteristic canvases, "After the Shower," in which the first gleam of lurid light, following angry retreating thunder clouds, bursts upon field, wood and meadow, and gives promise of the golden sunlight soon to follow and illumine the refreshed earth. Do they not throb with the pulsations of a poetic heart, and cannot one almost see in imagination the artist's prayer answered and his brush fulfilling his solicited soul's request? "Spirit of the Living, breathe to me Thy promises. Clothing the vision

of our land. Where has she ever found such an interpreter of her skies, her fields, her woods, her streams and hills? Thou hast shown the pearly mists of our summer morns and the golden glow of our summer eves as none before! Thou hast recalled to us the "green malignant light of coming storm," "the woods and hills vexed with raining," and the "valleys swept before the besom of the thunder," and hast revealed the after victory of light! Thou hast made us thy debtors, and thy works will prove to all men that American art is not alone a fiction and a name!

The fifty-nine examples hung in the present collection have been carefully selected and well represent the different periods of Inness's artistic career. Born in 1825, his earliest efforts in the field of art were covered with those of Casilear, Kensett, and Durand. A month's tuition under Regis Gignoux was almost the only real art instruction that he had. A European tour made when Rousseau was only beginning to be famous in France, was finished when the influence of the

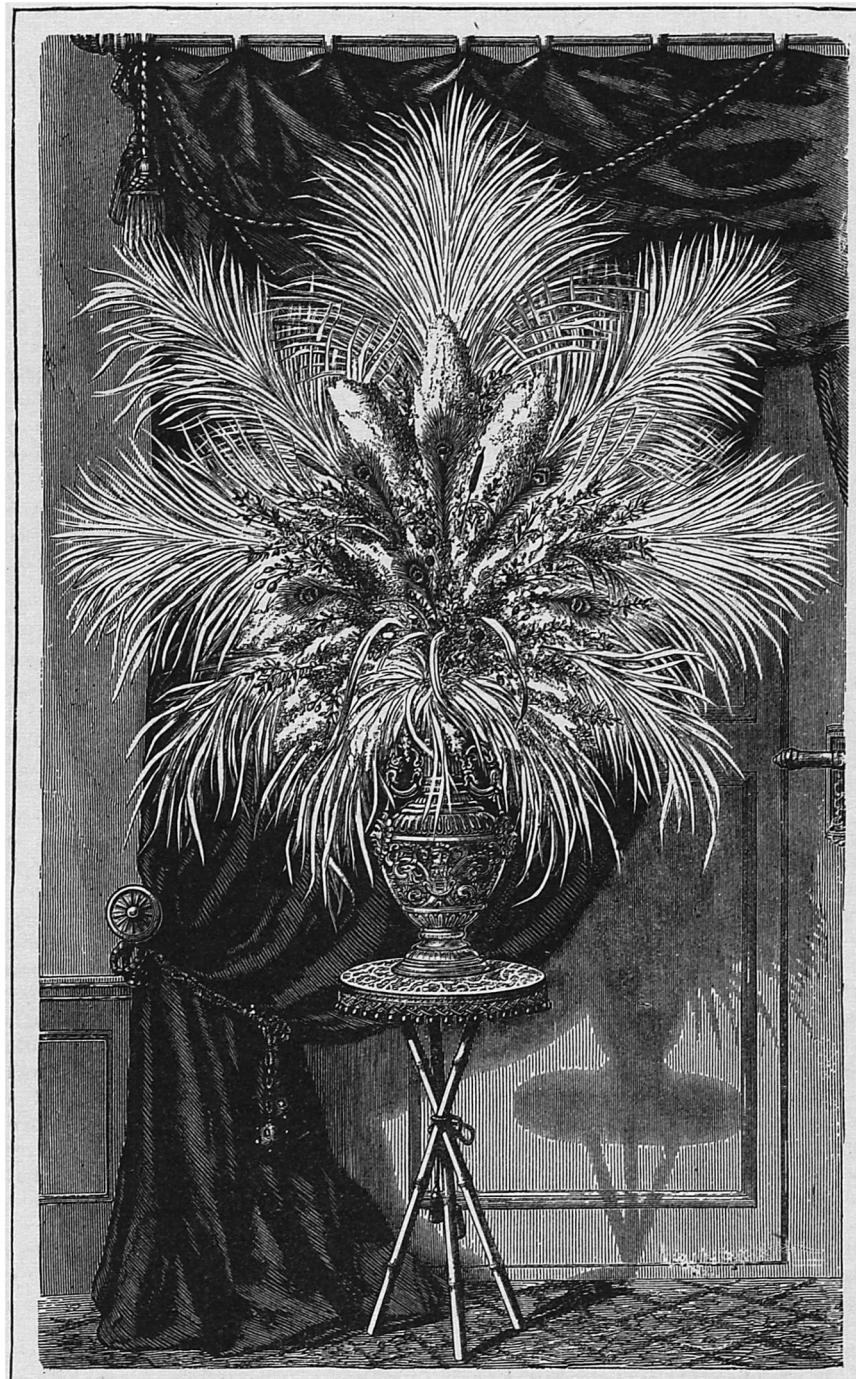
Düsseldorf school was first firmly felt on American art. The works of his first period up to 1853, are unrepresented in this collection, and, perhaps, wisely so, for they are only valuable as possessing shadows of the future genius which has made his later ones so noteworthy among those of American painters. His second period lasted from 1853 to 1862, and was, in a sense, only formative; then came his third, lasting till 1871, during which he produced many strong canvases. He went abroad in 1872, and his fourth period dates from his return in 1876 up to the present time.

The increased interest and activity in art matters which began with the introduction of the Munich school into this country, was a great stimulant and aid to Inness, and the work of the first few years is undoubtedly his best. Never identified with the Hudson River School, he yet saw and felt its good points as he did those of the new departure, while he, as well, never let the lasso wielded so skillfully by William M. Chase, P. Alden Weir, and others, tighten around his neck. So he stands to-day, a man identified with no school or clique of art, and yet a master of distinctively his own vigorous wants, a substantive in thought and expression, and yet gifted with the poetic soul which alone can rightly interpret nature, such as is vouchsafed to few, and certainly to no other American artist in so great a degree.

And now a word as to the works in the present collection by which the artist can best be known. As they come thronging into memory, the mind lost in delicious retrospection, finds it difficult to stir the pen which may attempt to briefly describe their beauty and their power. Shall we linger near "The Glow of Sunset," that wonderful rendering of the flood of yellow and gold light which pours forth at sunset over quiet land and river, and reveals to us "a new heaven and a new earth," or shall we pass on to the low-toned, cool, and tender "Moonrise," and the solemn stillness of early night?

Perhaps the delicate little "Mill Stream," with the freshness of the cool summer day which it brings to us will delight us more, or the silvery "Landscape" of his second period with the light and clear air, which instructively recalls Durand, and yet which is not Durand. The lovers of Corot delight in "June," a perfect transcription of a summer day, which has much of the great Frenchman's quality, and yet an originality far beyond criticism, and again the admirers of Kensett, dead, will say that Landscape (No. 44) recalls their favorite's brush, as will those of Duprè say the same for "English Oaks," but still will grant the freedom and vigor which can recall a loved technique and yet be not the same. Does one wish to know how Inness manages greens, that fatal stumbling block to most American painters? Let him study the "Gray, Lowering Day," where the luxuriant foliage of early summer sodden with rain, hangs motionless beneath a leaden sky and the air breathes moisture.

The exhibition has been a most successful one and has greatly revived and stimulated public interest in this representative of American painters.



THE MAKART BOUQUET. FOR WINDOW ORNAMENT.

of my hopes in all Thy varied hues, touch Thou that chord of pity for this quivering flesh, which rules my soul to give of its abundance." "Nature, the old nurse, did indeed take Inness as a 'child upon her knee,' and has never relaxed her fostering care."

Inness is often called an uneven painter, and he is such an one. The flight of genius cannot always be a sustained one. Lower levels must now and then be sought, that the higher ones may be again attempted and again reached. In this respect his power is perhaps most greatly manifested. There is no dull level of excellence in his work; here and there is a canvas whose points call for severe criticism from a strict, artistic standpoint; but how quickly are they forgotten in contemplation of another, which stirs us with a nameless thrill, and which makes us exclaim, "I too have seen just such a summer day in a woodland glade," where

"The long drooping boughs between
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen,
Alternate come and go."

We bow to thee, painter of the natural beauties